

National Wildlife Refuge System



Refuge System Updates are brought to you by National Wildlife Refuge System Headquarters to provide periodic information on Refuge System-related activities at the Washington level that are of immediate interest to field managers, agency and program leaders, and others (please share with your staffs)

Heroic Work by Service Employees Supports Hurricane Katrina Recovery

Service employees have been instrumental in helping with cleanup and recovery in the communities hard hit by Hurricane Katrina. More than 200 Service employees are handling logistics and search and rescue efforts. Forty-eight employees are working on Service lands, including national wildlife refuges, and another 11 are working on oil and hazardous materials duty. The Service provided food, water, fuel and a safe place for the night to local police and fire departments, as well as 100 American Red Cross and International Red Cross volunteers, National Guardmen and other law enforcement officers engaged in search and rescue in New Orleans and elsewhere. Others are helping with debris removal around hospitals, schools and government buildings and extinguishing brush fires.

Ten national wildlife refuges in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi remain temporarily closed due to damage caused by the hurricane, which had originally forced the closing of 16 refuges and other Service facilities. National wildlife refuges and other Service facilities will cost more than \$90 million to repair, although not all stations have been assessed.

In the Washington Office, the Emergency Management Coordination Group, chaired by LeaAnne Thorne, Refuges Law Enforcement Safety Specialist, is coordinating emergency activity within the Service and supporting regional work. The group, which includes representative from each of the Service's assistant directors, was formed even before Hurricane Katrina hit. The group has already succeeded in getting the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay some of the cost of establishing and operating the base camp at the Southeast Louisiana Refuge complex in Lacombe.

For more information on the impact of the hurricane and the recovery efforts, visit the Region 4 Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/>.